

Serial No. 09/914,701

Art Unit: 1742

Amendments to the Claims

1. (Previously Presented) A liquid composition of matter that is suitable as electrolyte for a non-sludging electrolytic zinc phosphate treatment process, said liquid composition comprising water, dissolved phosphoric acid, dissolved nitric acid, dissolved zinc cations, m chemically distinct species of cations other than zinc, and n distinct species of anions other than anions derivable by ionization of phosphoric and nitric chemically acids, each of m and n independently being zero or a positive integer, the concentration of zinc in moles per liter in said liquid composition satisfying the following mathematical condition:

$$\{Zn\} \leq 0.3 \{H_3PO_4\} + 0.5 \{HNO_3\} - 0.5 \sum_{i=0}^m p_i C_i + 0.5 \sum_{j=0}^n q_j A_j$$

in which: " $\{Zn\}$ ", " $\{H_3PO_4\}$ ", and " $\{HNO_3\}$ " respectively represent the zinc, phosphoric acid, and nitric acid concentrations in mol/L; each of C_0 and A_0 is zero; each of p_0 and q_0 is 1; if m is not zero, for each positive integer i from 1 to m , C_i represents the concentration in mol/L of the i th distinct cation species other than zinc present in the bath and p_i represents the cationic valence of said i th distinct cation species; and if n is not zero, for each positive integer j from 1 to n , A_j represents the concentration in mol/L of the j th distinct anion species other than anions derivable by ionization of phosphoric or nitric acids present in the bath and q_j represents the anionic valence of said j th distinct anion species;

- the phosphoric acid concentration is from 0.25 to 0.50 mol/L;

- the nitric acid concentration is from 0.65 to 0.90 mol/L; and

-
$$\{Zn\} \geq 0.27 \{H_3PO_4\} + 0.45 \{HNO_3\} - 0.45 \sum_{i=0}^m p_i C_i + 0.45 \sum_{j=0}^n q_j A_j$$

Serial No. 09/914,701

Art Unit: 1742

Claims 2-5 cancelled

6. (Original) A liquid composition according to claim 1, wherein $\{Zn\}/\{H_3PO_4\} < 0.91$.
7. (Previously Presented) A liquid composition according to claim 1, additionally comprising at least one additive selected from the group consisting of nitrous acid, permanganic acid, peroxysulfuric acid, hydrogen peroxide, chloric acid, perchloric acid, nitrobenzene sulfonic acid, hydroxylamine, starch/phosphoric acid esters, fluorine compounds, and salts of all of the other materials previously recited in this group for which salts are known.
8. (Previously Presented) A process for forming a zinc phosphate conversion coating on a metal substrate without generating any sludge thereby, said process comprising operations of:
- (I) bringing said metal substrate into contact with a volume of a liquid composition according to claim 1, said volume of liquid composition also being in contact with a counter electrode that is distinct from said metal substrate; and
 - (II) causing electric current in flow in a cathodizing direction through said metal substrate into said volume of liquid composition and through said counter electrode.
9. (Original) A process according to claim 8, wherein:
- said volume of liquid composition is maintained during operation (II) at a temperature that is between 50 and 85 °C; and
 - in operation (II) there is a current density through said metal substrate that is between 0.5 and 50 A/dm².
10. (Original) A process according to claim 9, wherein:
- said volume of liquid composition is maintained during operation (II) at a temperature that is between 75 and 85 °C; and
 - in operation (II) there is a current density through said metal substrate that is between 7.0

Serial No. 09/914,701

Art Unit: 1742

and 15 A/dm².

11. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 8, wherein prior to operation (I), said metal substrate is brought into contact with a weakly basic aqueous colloidal solution that contains titanium oxide, titanium hydroxide, and zinc phosphate.

12. (Previously Presented) A liquid composition that is suitable as electrolyte for a nonsludging electrolytic zinc phosphate treatment process, said liquid composition comprising water, at least 0.10 mol/L dissolved phosphoric acid, at least 0.3 mol/L dissolved nitric acid, dissolved zinc cations, m chemically distinct species of cations other than zinc, and n chemically distinct species of anions other than anions derivable by ionization of phosphoric and nitric acids, each of m and n independently being zero or a positive integer, the concentration of zinc in moles per liter in said liquid composition satisfying both of the following mathematical conditions:

$$\{Zn\} \leq 0.3 \{H_3PO_4\} + 0.5 \{HNO_3\} - 0.5 \sum_{i=0}^m p_i C_i + 0.5 \sum_{j=0}^n q_j A_j; \text{ and}$$

$$\{Zn\} \geq 0.15 \{H_3PO_4\} + 0.25 \{HNO_3\} - 0.25 \sum_{i=0}^m p_i C_i + 0.25 \sum_{j=0}^n q_j A_j.$$

in which : "{Zn}", "{H₃PO₄", and "{HNO₃" respectively represent the zinc, phosphoric acid, and nitric acid concentrations in mol/L; each of C₀ and A₀ is zero; each p₀ and q₀ is 1; if m is not zero for each positive integer j from 1 to m , C _{j} represents the concentration in mol/L of the j th distinct cation species other than zinc present in the bath and p_j represents the cationic valence of said j th distinct cation species; and if n is not zero, for each positive integer j from 1 to n , A _{j} represents the concentration in mol/L of the j th distinct anion species other than anions derivable by ionization of phosphoric or nitric acids present in the bath and q_j represents the anionic valence of said j th distinct anion species, wherein $\{Zn\}/\{H_3PO_4\} < 0.91$.

Serial No. 09/914,701

Art Unit: 1742

13. (Previously Presented) A liquid composition according to claim 12, additionally comprising 0.0005 to 1.0 mol/L of at least one additive selected from the group consisting of nitrous acid, permanganic acid, peroxyulfuric acid, hydrogen peroxide, chloric acid, perchloric acid, nitrobenzene sulfonic acid, hydroxylamine, starch/phosphoric acid esters, fluorine compounds, and salts of all the other materials previously recited in this group for which salts are known.
14. (Previously Presented) A liquid composition of matter that is suitable as electrolyte for a nonsludging electrolytic zinc phosphate treatment process, said liquid composition comprising water, at least 0.20 mol/L dissolved phosphoric acid, at least 0.20 mol/L dissolved nitric acid, dissolved zinc cations, m chemically distinct species of cations other than zinc, and n chemically distinct species of anions other than anions derivable by ionization of phosphoric and nitric acids, each of m and n independently being zero or a positive integer, the concentration of zinc in moles per liter in said liquid composition satisfying both of the following mathematical conditions:

$$\{Zn\} \leq 0.3 \{H_3PO_4\} + 0.5 \{HNO_3\} - 0.5 \sum_{i=0}^m p_i C_i + 0.5 \sum_{j=0}^n q_j A_j; \text{ and}$$

$$\{Zn\} \geq 0.27 \{H_3PO_4\} + 0.45 \{HNO_3\} - 0.45 \sum_{i=0}^m p_i C_i + 0.45 \sum_{j=0}^n q_j A_j.$$

in which: " $\{Zn\}$ ", " $\{H_3PO_4\}$ ", and " $\{HNO_3\}$ " respectively represent the zinc, phosphoric acid, and nitric acid concentrations in mol/L; each of C_0 and A_0 is zero; each p_0 and q_0 is 1; if m is not zero for each positive integer j from 1 to m , C_j represents the concentration in mol/L of the j th distinct cation species other than zinc present in the bath and p_j represents the cationic valence of said j th distinct cation species; and if n is not zero, for each positive integer j from 1 to n , A_j

Serial No. 09/914,701

Art Unit: 1742

represents the concentration in mol/L of the j th distinct anion species other than anions derivable by ionization of phosphoric or nitric acids present in the bath and q_j represents the anionic valence of said j th distinct anion species, wherein $\{Zn\}/\{H_3PO_4\} < 0.91$.

15. (Previously Presented) A liquid composition according to claim 14, additionally comprising 0.0005 to 1.0 mol/L of at least one additive selected from the group consisting of nitrous acid, permanganic acid, peroxyulfuric acid, hydrogen peroxide, chloric acid, perchloric acid, nitrobenzene sulfonic acid, hydroxylamine, starch/phosphoric acid esters, fluorine compounds, and salts of all the other materials previously recited in this group for which salts are known.

16. (Previously Presented) A process for forming a zinc phosphate conversion coating on a metal substrate without generating any sludge thereby, said process comprising operations of:

- (I) bringing said metal substrate into contact with a volume of a liquid composition according to claim 12, said volume of liquid composition also being in contact with a counter electrode that is distinct from said metal substrate; and
- (II) causing electric current to flow in a cathodizing direction through said metal substrate into said volume of liquid composition and through said counter electrode.

17. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 16, wherein:

- said volume of liquid composition is maintained during operation (II) at a temperature that is between 50 and 85°C; and
- in operation (II) there is a current density through said metal substrate that is between 0.5 and 50 A/dm².

18. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 16, wherein prior to operation (I), said metal substrate is brought into contact with a weakly basic aqueous colloidal solution that

Serial No. 09/914,701

Art Unit: 1742

contains titanium oxide, titanium hydroxide, and zinc phosphate.

19. (Previously Presented) A process for forming a zinc phosphate conversion coating on a metal substrate without generating any sludge thereby, said process comprising operations of:

- (I) bringing said metal substrate into contact with a volume of a liquid composition according to claim 14, said volume of liquid composition also being in contact with a counter electrode that is distinct from said metal substrate; and
- (II) causing electric current to flow in a cathodizing direction through said metal substrate into said volume of liquid composition and through said counter electrode.

20. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 19, wherein:

- said volume of liquid composition is maintained during operation (II) at a temperature that is between 75 and 85°C; and
- in operation (II) there is a current density through said metal substrate that is between 7.0 and 15 A/dm².

21. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 19, wherein prior to operation (I), said metal substrate is brought into contact with a weakly basic aqueous colloidal solution that contains titanium oxide, titanium hydroxide, and zinc phosphate.

22. (Previously Presented) The liquid composition of claim 12, wherein:

- the phosphoric acid concentration is from 0.20 to 0.60 mol/L;
- the nitric acid concentration is from 0.30 to 1.0 mol/L

23. (Currently Amended) The liquid composition of claim 1, wherein:

- the phosphoric acid concentration is from 0.30 to 0.50 ~~0.25 to 0.60~~ mol/L;
- ~~the nitric acid concentration is from 0.30 to 1.0 mol/L.~~